

# Light and Darkness

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**Summary:** Matthew's death has affected Karis deeply as she tries to move forward but finds it difficult and unbearable to do so. But when Karis encounters Matthew in a dream, she makes the choice of confronting her innermost fear and learns what it means to be alive. Rated T, Dawnshipping

# **\*Chapter 1\*: Light and Darkness**

## **LIGHT AND DARKNESS**

A Golden Sun FanFiction by PowerZone

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**Author's Note:** *This is my second one-shot story for Golden Sun, featuring the oh-so-lovable pair: Matthew and Karis (Dawnshipping). Arc is set after the game with an alternative ending: What if the Chaos Hound didn't step in to save Matthew and Sveta? Of course, we would know the kind of inevitable end. As a short summary: Matthew's death has affected Karis deeply as she tries to move forward but finds it difficult and unbearable to do so. But when Karis encounters Matthew in a dream, she makes the choice of confronting her innermost fear and learns what it means to be alive.*

*WARNING: Some parts may not conform to the events in the game. Attempts in cheesiness may leave you singed or melted. Too much romantic inspiration taken into the parts in the stories were obtained by listening to songs from "Hale" (Google it up, it's the name of a melodrama band). You have been warned, now read the story and review.*  
*\*toodles\**

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### **\*\*\* STORY PROPER \*\*\***

**The journey was finally over.**

**We had obtained the feather from the Mountain Roc needed to reconstruct Ivan's broken soarwing. We had taken things further by stopping the Grave**

**Eclipse by activating the Apollo's Lens. We had thwarted all evil plans. We had discovered secrets of civilizations far and wide. We had made new friends, shared personal secrets, battled and celebrated together, joined in each other's sorrows, and took interest in numerous aspects of growing up.**

When Sveta asked to borrow his spirit to make use of the Umbra Gear to activate the Lens, she was doing a favor.

Yet even Matthew, where his unconscious body had left us in deep emotional frustration, could only handle as much of the deepness we felt. If ever he succeeded, I knew that he would have to go. But if this was the only way to save the world from being swallowed by the Eclipse, then he had to do it.

For everyone – for the souls torn apart and away by the merciless shadow monsters.

For me.

*Matthew... you don't have to do this. You don't have to go.*

It was a painstaking decision. I knew that his time was up. It would be my saddest goodbye. For I would not be given the chance to thank him for the wonderful journey of a lifetime. And I would not be given the chance to tell him how I felt for him in the course of the journey. I could not bear the weight of the guilt for not telling him when I had the chance. I should have taken my risks for putting our long-standing friendship to a new level.

I saw the both of them climb up the ladder. They would stop after a few steps – maybe they were hesitating to meet their end. But time was running out. Every step they took higher up, only tears could fall lower down.

They reached the controls. All what Sveta had to do was control the Lens long enough to destroy the Eclipse. She raised an arm. The magnificent colossal arm became an extension to her movements. I could not bear the sight of the both of them being slowly swallowed by the overwhelming light. It took every effort for them to unleash the one final act that would save the world. We heard it first, then we saw it. From out of the end of the titanic hand was a brilliant beam of light that shot out to the direction of the tower in Belinsk. It was over.

The Umbra Gear Sveta had been wearing shattered into pieces. Sveta embraced the light. Matthew's spirit followed after. But before he was subdued to the force of it, I saw him look down on me and speak out words I could not hear – but understand. "Thank you and I love you."

*I love you too.*

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### **A short time later...**

Back in the Lookout Cabin, the place where it all began, Isaac gently laid his son's body in a neat grave Tyrell dug. When I watched Tyrell the grave, I saw his tears of sorrow and regret stream down from his cheeks. Every dig, Tyrell relished. To him, it was an honor for the man he was happy to call his best friend and for the man who had saved the world from utter destruction. I could feel his pain. But he could not feel my greater pain – the only shadow that could not – and probably never – go away even in the midst of the light.

Only Garet, Tyrell, Isaac, and I were there to put Matthew to his eternal rest. Rief and Kraden returned to Imil to bear the grim news of Isaac's only son. Eoleo did some soul-searching

in the high seas. Himi returned to Yamata City to pass on the stories of her short-lived but all-the-same exciting adventure. Amiti went back to Ayuthay after learning of his uncle's passing and served on the royal throne. But Belinsk, the happiest town in Angara when we first visited, mourned. Even as the Eclipse had been eradicated, upon learning that their king and his sister succumbed to death, every beastman to the lowest order mourned to an unfathomable extent.

Matthew looked so gentle and innocent. His expression at his grave looked very much similar to one when I caught him napping in the ship as we left Yamata City with Himi in our group – so peaceful even when there's certain danger ahead.

We said our prayers and thanks. Tyrell was uncontrollable. He had been wailing for most of the time and still could not accept the fact that his best friend was gone. The only one who savored the full course of the pain was Isaac – though he would not show it outwardly. Isaac's expression mirrored his son's – they were headstrong and fearsome, often reckless but always get things done and right. Gareth felt the grief from his son as he tenderly embraced Tyrell in vain comfort. Even as Tyrell was close to him, Gareth could feel how it would be for him to lose his own. It could have been Gareth whom Sveta chose to accompany in the Apollo's Lens. But fate was not always so kind. Or fate must have brought a better purpose.

Isaac filled the grave with the soil dug up for the grave as we said our final words.

"Can I stay here a little longer?" I asked Isaac as soon as he placed the last mound of soil on the grave. He nodded.

"Don't stay out too long," he said. I could not tell from those words if he was hopeful or hurt.

"Matt," I started when everyone else went inside the cabin. His name had become a taboo in my heart. Mentioning his name out loud would only encourage tears to flow out from my eyes. "You didn't have to do that. You didn't have... you should have just..." My words were lost in the middle of tears. Even my knees weakened and eventually gave way as I knelt in front of the grave.

"I should have told you earlier when I had the chance. I knew you were being a little too soft on Sveta. But I left you to your better judgment." I didn't know what came over me – it was like I could muster all the courage to shout in front of someone; yet I knew that no matter how loud I could express all my resentment and frustration, it would never bring him back. "You, Tyrell, and I – we've been best friends for our entire life. I thought we'd have a chance... to be together to the very end, Matt. I thought that when the ordeal would be over, I would have at least known you a little more." Those words made me selfish, but they came from my heart. If he were in front of me, listening to all the words I said, he would be hurt. It was too much to bear.

Matthew must have seen this to the very end. He was always expectant that the journey would end with all of us together. I knew him better – he was the happiest guy when times were good, and he was the gloomiest when times seemed bad. But he was always optimistic, always placed himself to defend the helpless, to give justice to what was right and right, and always full of thoughts that seemed sometimes unfathomable. But when he went into the light, I was devastated. The light that kept on bringing everyone the spark of hope turned out to be the fate that took away what good it could do for Matthew to save the world.

And now, in the enveloping darkness of night, watching a fresh mound of dirt over the remains of the cost of true bravery and selfless sacrifice felt like being swallowed by a perpetual shadow.

*I just wanted you to know that before you would go, I hoped at the very least that you would know how I felt towards you. It's just... having you go away from me... I'm hurt... I'm hurt, Matt.*

"I'm hurt, Matt." With the final words said, I exerted great effort to stand up, turn around, and walk slowly back to the cabin. The sun had completely set.

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### **That night...**

It was hard to sleep that night – if not hard, then impossible.

The thoughts of Matthew flooded my mind. Ever since I watched his spirit be consumed by the light, I felt the most of every burden from every emotion stemming from those who helplessly watched. But what aggravated my pain were the happy thoughts of being with Matthew – from the time when we were kids as we liked to play in Patcher's Place to the time when we started out on the journey to the many times when we would almost lose our heads to bizarre and unusual events. Such factors of happiness only invited an exponential amount of sadness.

I tried to think back to the moments where Matthew kept me strong and happy. He was one not to talk openly to all of us. But Matthew was very insightful when he opened up conversations with different people.

Then back to our first kiss – it was the day before Tyrell broke the soarwing. I didn't know it back then if Matthew was just

being nice. But what he said to me that day meant a whole new things for me. "If ever we go out on a journey just like our dads went, I promise that we'll make it the journey of our lifetime."

When I did manage to sleep, I began to have dreams of him – with him.

Every night after days of doing our best to accept the facts and trying to move on, I dreamt of him. Those dreams, no matter how little or insignificant, were tidbits of our adventure throughout Angara. But one particular dream – a foresight which I could never forget – made me rethink of the way I viewed about death.

Especially when he stood in front of me.

"Karis," a haunting yet pleasant echo reverberated around the dismal dimensions.

When I did managed to muster my courage – all the same when Matthew always told me to – I called out into the silence, "Matthew?"

Abruptly, a gust of wind wheezed past. I turned around quickly then gasped.

"M-Matt!"

We were standing a few feet from each other – yet we were in so different parts of the dimension of the dream. He was in the light. I was in the dark. Between us was a hollow space where light and dark clashed. *Where's the symbolism in all of this?*

"Come into the light," Matthew's ghostly figure said. He looked so real, so brave, so handsome in the clothes he wore

when he embraced the light.

And there he was in front of me, reaching out his gentle hand which I caressed on numerous occasions. How I wanted to hold it again, to be with him, to be with the boy – nay, the man – whom I've known for almost all my life and whom I've loved with no boundaries.

But even as he smiled, beneath his twinkling eyes was simply a hollow spot – the emptiness seething away from him as the creeping feeling came over me. Even as I raised my hand to feel him, I could not push myself to take gentle steps forward – for the darkness to meet the light. I didn't know why.

Matthew lowered his hand. "What's wrong?" he asked gently and oh-so-sweetly.

"M-Matt," I spoke, trying to push myself to be courageous and headstrong only to cower in my emotions and even unable to look at him across the gap that divided light and darkness. "I still... don't accept..."

"... the fact that I'm gone?" Matthew finished.

I could only whimper.

"Karis, look at me," came Matthew.

I sighed and looked into his eyes – his crystalline eyes. Even in the few seconds of silence, I tried to find who he was when we both grew up together. The pictures of childhood – of future dreams and moments of mischief, of lessons learned and pains endured, of sword and staff raised high glinting to meet the blood of the enemy – all flashed between us with just a simple look. It was hard to find out who he really was at the end – whether he was noble to

accept the fate that belay him when he climbed up the ladder for the Apollo's Lens or whether he had doubts to save the world. Yet, I could only pick the former not to tarnish his memory – whatever that was left.

I looked deep into his eyes – even as the essences of Mercury filled mine. Those eyes always served painful reminders of how and why I should accept the ever-twisted hand of fate.

"I will never be gone," he said, his words controlled.

"But you went into the light... and you're in the light!" I exclaimed. Even as I said those words, I was still drowned in a pot full of frustration.

"And you're in the darkness," Matthew went on. "Even as we speak, you're still in the darkness. And you refuse to push yourself away because you cannot accept the fact that you don't want to move out of it."

My mouth gaped open. He was right. It was not a symbolic meaning anymore. He was being truthful. The plain definition of darkness had just been connoted.

"Please step into the light," Matthew instructed me as he held out his hand once more. "Let's walk."

Rather than obey my senses again, I obeyed my heart faithfully. This time, I let my heart control my hand as I reached out to feel Matthew.

"Karis, you have grown so brave – so beautiful, much more than I remember about you, " he commented.

In a second as I placed my hand into his, Matthew gently grasped my hand as he pulled me closer. I could only

transfix my attention on him as the dimension of darkness behind me faded away to be replaced by a wonderfully bright dimension similar to where Matthew stood. Even in death or in dream, Matthew's rosy touch could never be forgotten.

"Where are we going?" I asked, unsure if we were walking in any path. The only thing around us was a haze – somewhere above us was a source of light I could not identify.

"You'll see," he answered. The charming and mysterious personality still stuck to him.

We walked hand-in-hand through who-knew-where for some time.

"Matt," I started as we continued walking. It felt like grass below but even at the nearness of it, I could only make out a thick whitish fog enveloping my feet.

"Here we are."

The haze quickly disappeared, replaced by a bright image of a scenery which I knew so well. This was the fields on the bottom of Goma Plateau, where we usually played when we were young. It was also here where I first met Matthew when our fathers had a little meet-up in Patcher's Place. It was an exhilarating sight; the trip down memory lane had been given a new meaning to its hundred connotations. And too soon, the exhilaration that had once captivated me – where youth had brought joy and misery to our ever-so-shattered lives in growing up – was replaced by a new kind of sorrow.

"Matthew?" I spoke, unable to grasp the level of deep sadness arising within.

"What is it, Karis?"

"I want to know something," I said to him. We stopped walking but Matthew didn't let go of my hand. His eagerness meant something. "Why did... you make that decision?"

Matthew's smile faded for a moment. In the silence, I could hear his deep breaths as his eyes gazed away. He must be either searching for an answer or trying to keep me from knowing.

"I had a lot of choices, numerous frustrations," Matthew finally spoke. "I really wanted to spend the rest of my life with you." Even as he smiled, I could only wallow in sorrow. "It seems I broke the promise, one that I even made."

*I hate you at this very moment...*

However, doing so would tarnish the memory I kept of him. It was the kind of memory that I might place in a clear crystal ball and hold it delicately between my fingertips. But considering the numerous acts of selfless sacrifice, to put himself in the wake of others who were in deep danger... he had a life well-written, the heavenly hand of acceptance that welcomed Matthew into the kind of paradise he deserved. Matthew was one of the selfless people I've known, one whom I could truly say to be a world-class hero.

*... but I could not be angry at you for it.*

"I really want to be with you," I whispered, unable to muster any more pain at the thought of losing him. The pain had dissipated once I realized how much good we had done for the world throughout our journey. This time, the darkness that had filled me like a void had been replaced by a light of hope.

"I feel the same way, Karis," Matthew replied. When he said that, it seemed the light of hope from the shadow I had just

emerged had presented itself to me. What a way to forget about everything and just spend the rest of the afterlife with the person whom I loved. It would seem absurd – as long as hope and happiness would reign in the two of us. But all the hopes that pumped up weakened away when he frowned and said, "But I can't."

"Why?"

The Venus Adept turned to me. "While this may be the kind of paradise, you're still not... fit, for lack of a better word... to stand where I am." He was being cryptic once again.

"But I've been happy, Matt," I said almost demandinglly. "We've given the light to others in the midst of the Grave Eclipse. We were the hope when they were hopeless." But before I could continue, I found myself locked in Matthew's oh-so-gentle embrace. The nostalgic Venusian smell had just dominated everything that I wanted to say to him.

With a gentle voice, Matthew replied, "Karis, life isn't measured by how much you give the light to others but by how you accept the light given back to you." Matthew was being enigmatic, but it was typical of him. "We had to go against our own wills to put our best feet forward in the interest of others, no matter how contradictory they were with our ideals."

He released the embrace. When I turned to look back, I realized that I was just one step away back into the darkness, as if it had come out from almost out of nowhere – begging for my wholeheartedness, ready once again to consume what was left of my fragility.

"Go on, life won't be always fair; but if you give the light in people's darkness in their hearts, just think how brighter that light can be when they are given back to you."

I turned around to face him. I wanted to plead. The haunting darkness scared me, even though I was generally fearless. Matthew's words of encouragement didn't act as much as an elixir would cure a stunned warrior – and stunned I was in body and mind.

Matthew walked towards my side and clasped my hand.

"Karis, I just want to say I'm sorry," he said. That piercing gaze again – it was stoic. "We've been friends for our whole lives. And I know I've let you really down when I... moved on." It was hard for him to say what it was exactly, but it was unbearable for me to spill it out in front of him. "Never for one single moment would I forget about you. It's just so hard for me to do that." His voice was wavering but the gentleness behind it was one that I always admired. "If I tried, it would just keep coming back."

"What are you trying to say?"

"Even after life, even when you saw my spirit go inside that light, as long as I remain in you... how could I not forget you, Karis?"

The stinging sensation intensified within me. The longer and greater it went, the more it became unbearable. I wanted to be with him – in this void of a place I couldn't even recognize. Yet, Matthew felt more at home here. Here, I was just a stranger who couldn't even comprehend the meaning of the afterlife.

I had to succumb to my vulnerability as I flung myself forward into Matthew. "I don't want to leave you, Matt," I sobbed into his shirt.

Matthew enclosed both of his arms around me. It felt too real to be good – yet it was also too real to be sad, knowing that

it would never happen again the moment I would step back into the darkness. "I don't want to leave you either, Karis," he replied softly. "The only time when I would be truly dead is when I am forgotten." I looked up to watch his eyes twinkle and his lips curve a smile. "When you really think about it, Karis, this doesn't really seem to be a dream at all."

"Matt..."

It had to be expected as I watched Matthew lean closer. The edges of reason had just slipped away when I felt my heart palpitate. Somewhere between the lines of reason and emotion was a dimension that I could not fully comprehend or understand, but I took advantage of the bliss anyway. Rather than wait for the intensity to reach its peak, I succumbed to the ravages of my emotion and pushed myself forward.

It was there that the sorrows of the Grave Eclipse, the lamentations of the Mourning Moon, and all the bitter trials endured throughout our journey – all that we had worried for all this time just whisked away like soft cherry blossoms in the soothing gust that enveloped the both of us. For even when we closed our eyes and our lips met in the one moment that eternity would never break us apart, we knew that even between light and darkness was the one string of shining hope that would connect us. If the darkness would consume me whole, only that string of shining hope would keep me connected to the light that I would meet.

But reason overflowed my emotion as Matthew's and my lips parted. The one moment of unbreakable eternity had ended all too soon, and it was time to face the darkness. If Matthew had already moved on, I knew that I would do so too. And someday, when reason was out of options, I would join the light to stay by his side for another unbreakable eternity.

"Karis," Matthew spoke one more time just as I took my first step forward.

I turned around to face him for the last time.

"I will be waiting."

That moment would be something that I would keep with me to my grave. Even as the darkness overwhelmed me without my feet moving to a particular direction, I did not feel afraid. I knew that he would be waiting for me at a particular time – not too soon. I closed my eyes and let everything around me do the rest.

*I will come back soon.*

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### **The next morning...**

I woke up almost thinking that Matthew was sitting at my bed. He always used to do that during our journey as he loved to make out a laugh on our wake-up calls. Tears had been pouring down my face the entire time I dreamt of him. But time meant nothing.

That's when I realized that someone was sitting on the foot of the bed. It was Isaac, who seemed as if he had been in the room for quite some time – maybe he had something to tell me. Even with the sensational dream, I could only stare at the man who risked and lost everything. But when he blinked, the fraction of a second told me that there was only one way to move forward: acceptance.

"I've had the same dream you did," Isaac started solemnly. "It was about him, right?"

I nodded – unlike my father, Isaac couldn't read minds. But he had a special gift for knowing what would lie ahead and his intuition was almost always correct. "Life isn't measured by how much you give the light to others but by how you accept the light given back to you." I repeated the final words. Surprisingly, those were the same words given to Isaac in his version. The cryptic message meant something, one for us to find out on our own.

It would be hard for me to move on as Matthew did, but for now as long as I could accept the new dawn in my life, it would be a kind of personal journey for me to undertake alone.

**\*\*\* END \*\*\***

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***Final Note from the Author:*** *This was supposed to be my first one-shot story for Golden Sun. But I encountered a moment of writer's block when I got to the middle part. It's a little difficult to write an angst genre, but I did my best to get the feel of it. Maybe soon enough, I'll add a little more humor in my future Dawnshipping stories.*

*And once again, thank you to everyone who read or will read and reviewed or will review this story. Constructive criticisms, helpful advices, and outright praises are highly appreciated. If there are grammatical errors and confusing plotlines, please PM to me so I can make an updated version soon. Nevertheless, I didn't stray far from the intended story plot. And as usual, you guys in the Golden Sun FanFiction universe are rock-hard and thunderstruck awesome!*

**PowerZone**